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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 1, 5, 7 & 14 are objected to because of the following informalities: The term "plastics" should be changed to --plastic--. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In Claim 1, the recitations "the rear wall" and "the side walls" do not have a proper antecedent basis. Consequently, the remaining claims are rejected since they are dependent upon an indefinite claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1, 2 & 4-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzardo [US Patent 3,070,235]. Manzardo (figures 1-27, but specifically figures 18-20) teaches of a key box (fig. 18) having a door (110) and a housing (housing as

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shown in fig. 18) which can be closed by the door, in which the rear wall (defined by 107's) of the housing is provided with key-hanging means (109, 32), characterized in that side walls (101, 102) and the door of the housing comprises cut-to-length continuous profiles which, in the region of their edges facing away from the door, have vertically running guide grooves (105 for example – also, see fig. 19) for receiving the rear wall, and in that the side walls are attached to a bottom part (103) forming the floor of the box and a top part (104) forming the roof of the box. Manzardo teaches applicant's inventive claimed key box as disclosed above, but does not specifically state that the housing [for the embodiment in figs. 18-20] is made of metal or plastic [Manzardo states "wood" for this embodiment, but does note in the other embodiments that the housing can be made of sheet metal or other material (see col. 2)]. As such, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a varying array of known materials for the manufacture of the housing depending upon the personal preferences of the designer and/or the designated environment for the finished product since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of it's suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp., 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945); and *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). As to claim 2, the side walls are configured as solid profiles and do not have a hollow portion; however, the position is taken that it would have been an obvious matter of personal preference to vary the shape, profile or size of an element depending upon the needs and/or preferences of

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the user, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the configuration of a component. A change of this degree is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966) (The court held that the configuration of the claimed disposable plastic nursing container was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed container was significant). Furthermore, the Federal Circuit has held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device. Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984). As to claim 4, Manzardo teaches the side walls and door as being made of wood profiles, but not extruded aluminum; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational. As to claim 5, Manzardo teaches the top and bottom parts as being made of wood parts, but not plastic molded parts; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational. As to claim 6, the real wall comprises a plurality of segments (viewed as the "segments" (107) between pairs of grooves (109)) disposed one above the other. As to claim 7, the material of the segments appears to be wood, not plastic molded parts; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational. As to claim 8, the side walls have flanges (viewed as the end flange behind the groove on each wall

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– fig. 19) forming parts of the wall. As to claim 9, the side walls have flanges as noted previously and these flanges act as a guide for the segments. As to claim 10, the key hanging means are formed by a key rail (32) which is hung in a perforation or groove (109) in the rear wall. As to claim 11, the top and bottom parts are similarly configured. As to claim 12, the side walls are similarly configured. As to claims 13-20, these limitations/features have been addressed previously within the body of the rejection.

6. Claims 1-9 & 11-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu [US Patent 6,474,759]. Hsu (figures 1-27) teaches of a “key” box (fig. 6) having a door (7) and a housing (housing as shown in fig. 6) which can be closed by the door, in which the rear wall (4) of the housing is provided with key-hanging means (viewed as the horizontal ledge), characterized in that side walls (2, 3) and the door of the housing comprises continuous profiles which, in the region of their edges facing away from the door, have vertically running guide grooves (34 for example – also, see fig. 1) for receiving the rear wall, and in that the side walls are attached to a bottom part (1) forming the floor of the box and a top part (5) forming the roof of the box. Hsu teaches applicant’s inventive claimed “key” box as disclosed above, but does not specifically state that the housing is made of metal or plastic [although, it is readily apparent that the housing is made of a plastic material]. As such, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize a varying array of known materials for the manufacture of the housing depending upon the personal preferences of the designer and/or the designated environment for the finished product since it has been held to be within the

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general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp.*, 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945); and *In re Leshin*, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). As to claim 2, the side walls are configured partially as hollow profiles (note fig. 1) so far as broadly claimed. As to claim 3, the top part and bottom part are provided with cavities (15, 11 respectively) while the side walls having mating guide lugs (25, 35; 21, 31 respectively). Hsu teaches this lug to cavity connection, but not as prescribed by applicant [applicant claims the lugs being on the top and bottom parts]. However, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the box of Hsu so as to reconfigure the elements associated with the top, bottom and side parts/walls since it has been held that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art and therefore will not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability. *In re Gazda*, 219 F.2d 449, 104 USPQ 400 (CCPA 1955) (Prior art disclosed a clock fixed to the stationary steering wheel column of an automobile while the gear for winding the clock moves with the steering wheel; mere reversal of such movement, so the clock moves with wheel, was held to be an obvious expedient.). As to claim 4, Hsu teaches the side walls and door as being apparently molded profiles, but not extruded aluminum profiles; however, the position is taken that it would have been an obvious matter of personal preference to vary the shape, profile or size of an element depending upon the needs and/or preferences of the user, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the configuration of a

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component. A change of this degree is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966) (The court held that the configuration of the claimed disposable plastic nursing container was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed container was significant). Furthermore, the Federal Circuit has held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device. Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc., 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 830, 225 USPQ 232 (1984). As to claim 5, Hsu teaches the top and bottom parts as being apparently molded profiles, but not does specifically recite plastic molded parts; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational. As to claim 6, the real wall comprises a plurality of segments (viewed as the "segments" (top segment above the horizontal ledge and bottom segment below the ledge) disposed one above the other, so far as broadly claimed. As to claim 7, the material of the segments appears to be plastic molded parts, but just not specifically recited; however, the claimed feature is deemed obvious in view of the previously cited rational. As to claim 8, the side walls have flanges (viewed as the end flange defining the groove on each wall – fig. 1) forming parts of the wall. As to claim 9, the side walls have flanges as noted previously and these flanges act as a guide for the segments. As to claim 11, the top and bottom

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parts are similarly configured. As to claim 12, the side walls are similarly configured. As to claims 13-20, these limitations/features have been addressed previously within the body of the rejection.

7. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu in view of Manzardo. Hsu teaches applicant's inventive claimed "key" box as disclosed above, but does not show the key hanging means as being a key rail that is hung in perforations in the rear wall. Manzardo (see figs. 16-17) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known to utilize a key rail (32) hung in perforations (94) in a rear wall (93) of a key box. Accordingly, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the rear wall of Hsu so as to incorporate perforations for accepting a rail in view of Manzardo's teaching because this arrangement would enhance the versatility of Hsu's box since the addition of the perforations and rail would allow items to be hung on the rear wall, as opposed to be supported by the bottom part or shelf (6), thereby allowing for quick inspection by a user since the items would be suspended vertically along the rear wall.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Huang Hsu, Doohan, Victory and Lodge et al., describe boxes/structures for holding keys. Hwang, and Tisbo et al., describe housings manufacture with plastic molded parts. Junkers describe a hollow structural element

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used to form furniture structures. Albach et al., and Caruso describe knockdown / modular box structures.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James O. Hansen whose telephone number is 571-272-6866. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday between 8-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on 571-272-6867. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/James O. Hansen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3637

JOH
March 13, 2009